

NOAA-Sea Grant Extension Partnership Liaison

June 2018

Purpose

The Extension Partnership Liaison (EPL) will facilitate integration of NOAA research and end-user needs by using Sea Grant extension expertise to augment NOAA science and research engagement with the user community. The EPL will work with the Sea Grant Network and NOAA partner to identify needs and products on key topics (e.g. the National Water Model, ocean acidification) and use Sea Grant extension expertise to share NOAA's research results, information products, and services with stakeholders and research end-users at the community, state or regional level. The anticipated impacts of these positions are to enhance the application of NOAA research within the Sea Grant network and end-user communities; and to enhance the relevancy of NOAA research to address societal needs.

Potential NOAA partners

Because Sea Grant is a diverse network with strengths in all areas in which NOAA focuses, any NOAA program may benefit from a Sea Grant EPL— however the scope of the position, program needs, and relevance to Sea Grant goals must be clearly identified and attainable and agreed to by the NOAA, NSGO and the host Sea Grant program ("Parties") in a EPL agreement prior to funding the position. The agreement should clearly identify how this position can meet both NOAA and Sea Grant goals.

Extension Partnership Liaison Position

The EPL will have technical or scientific experience relevant to the NOAA partner program and substantial experience with Sea Grant or stakeholder engagement/extension. The EPL can be co-located at a Sea Grant office and a NOAA entity, or what is agreed upon by the parties in the EPL agreement; however there must be a connection and responsibility to both the NOAA entity and the Sea Grant Network. The EPL will work with the Network to identify end-users of the NOAA research and provide an avenue for input into NOAA research – both in the development stage and with product, information, service release. The EPL should report to the host Sea Grant program, who will help develop a work plan with input from the NOAA program and National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). The EPL will have a point of contact at NOAA who will help to identify research and other activities to which the EPL will contribute and that are ready for end-user engagement. The EPL will also have a contact in the NSGO to provide networking and communication opportunities on a national Sea Grant level.

Term of the Position

Since effective extension programming requires establishing trust and building networks among relevant user groups, the Parties should commit to support the position for a minimum of four years of funding (pending federal appropriations). The position will be renegotiated every four years (or at the end of the agreed upon term) pending successful performance of the position and the agreement of project duration.

Establishment of a EPL Position

The Parties must agree that there is a research or outreach need that the Sea Grant network is uniquely able to fill. Each new EPL must include a NOAA program partner and a host Sea Grant program. The position goals will be developed in partnership with the Parties and the EPL will be evaluated against these goals.

When funding is available, the NSGO will create a competition for new EPL position ideas which will be open to Sea Grant programs and a NOAA program partner. If an existing EPL position is found to be unsuccessful based on the evaluation, the NSGO will terminate that EPL, and may use that funding to open a competition for new EPL ideas.

Evaluation of the Position

The EPL will undergo a quadrennial evaluation to determine feasibility for continued value and success. A team made up individuals from the Parties will conduct a review to determine if the goals of the EPL plan are being met. If the goals have been met and the Parties agree on a continued need, the position will continue (assuming federal appropriations).

Funding

A funding commitment will be determined by all Parties. While some flexibility will be maintained, each party must provide a significant and meaningful contribution to the overall cost of the EPL for the position duration. Continuation of funding will be contingent on successful evaluation and recompetition based on the Parties' agreement.

Types of Positions

The genesis of the Sea Grant EPL positions was to create a connection between NOAA research and the Sea Grant network to enhance application of NOAA science within the Network and communities, and to enhance the relevancy of NOAA research to address societal needs. Currently, there are diverse types of liaison positions that are not solely extension, some that serve a region and some that are subject matter experts. What they all have in common is that their role is to help information development and exchange to improve partnerships between NOAA and Sea Grant and build operational and applicational use of NOAA research. The shared position between the state Sea Grant program and NOAA facility offers a powerful and cost effective mechanism to build mutual NOAA and Sea Grant capabilities and accomplishments at local to national scales. While this framework describes Extension Partnership Liaison, it is not intended to limit other types of partnership positions between NOAA and Sea Grant.

Management Best Practices

- Budgets should include funding for EPL travel to actively participate in relevant professional meetings and conferences in order to achieve EPL goals (such as Sea Grant Week/Extension and Communicators Conferences or regional meetings, and others as appropriate.)
- Each EPL should establish a small advisory committee whose members are drawn from the key constituents to support strategic planning, and to provide advice on implementation, integration, and partnership.

- Each EPL should submit impacts and accomplishments via their host Sea Grant program, existing reporting system, or directly to NSGO through the PIER system.
- The individual serving as the EPL should undergo a performance review that is consistent with the processes used by the host program for similar extension personnel. The quadrennial evaluation is to determine impacts and value of the position, not the individual holding the position.

Outputs and mechanisms for engagement across Sea Grant and NOAA

- 1-2 major Extension topical initiatives
- Quarterly webinars and One NOAA programs led by NSGO Extension Lead
- Quarterly EPL Sea Grant Newsletter led by NSGO Extension Lead
- Special features and articles for National Sea Grant or NOAA websites
- Attendance at Sea Grant national/regional meetings/conferences
- Community of Practice or Network membership (Fisheries Extension Network, Working Waterfronts, climate, etc.)
- Quarterly EPL meetings led by NSGO Extension Lead
- Participation in ongoing Sea Grant activities related to areas of expertise such as the visioning process

NSGO - 2nd cycle=6 years if evaluated successfully, parties agree on funding/continuation.